

Sign Language Interpreters

The following are answers to some frequently asked questions received by the Department of Safety and Professional Services. These questions and answers are general in nature and are provided as a public service. Licensees and applicants with specific questions should refer to the Wisconsin statutes and administrative code provisions which govern their profession. In any instance in which an answer may differ from the provisions of the statutes and administrative code provisions, the latter will govern.

What is a School-Sponsored Event?

A “**school-sponsored event**” includes any event that is sponsored by a school. This includes activities for children during the school day as well as after school such as:

- athletic events
- Parent / teacher conferences
- artistic performances
- school sponsored parent outreach activities.

It also includes activities necessary to carry out a child’s IEP, such as:

- Transition services including driver’s education (if not a school provided program)
- Work experience in the community,
- SAT/ ACT preparation and testing

Can a Department of Public Instruction (DPI) licensed educational interpreter who is not licensed by the state of Wisconsin as a sign language interpreter pursuant to Wis. Stat. s. 440.032(3) interpret for the following situations?

DPI licensed interpreters are not qualified to interpret for deaf adults in ANY circumstances.

1. A parent who is deaf and wants to attend a PTA or PTO meeting:
No, this activity requires a DSPS license because a PTA or PTO meeting is not school sponsored.
2. A parent who is deaf and wants to attend their child’s (deaf or hearing) parent-teacher conference:
No, a DSPS license is required to interpret for the adults (parents and the school employees).
3. A student who is deaf taking drivers’ education, or hunter safety which is offered at the school but provided by an independent company or agency:
It depends on the specific facts of the situation.

(a) **Yes**, if it is the activity takes place at the school, is part of the student’s IEP, or if the school pays for the program, or gives credit for the program.

- (b) **No**, if the program doesn't take place at the school, the school does not pay for the program or give credit for the program, or if the program is not in the student's IEP. Then a DSPS license will be required.
4. A child who is deaf involved in recreation department activities:
It depends on the specific facts of the situation.
- (a) **Yes**, if the recreation department is under the authority or jurisdiction of the school district.
- (b) **No**, if the recreation department is not under the authority of the school district, then it is not a school-sponsored event and a DSPS license would be required.
5. A parent who is deaf attending an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting:
No, a DSPS license is required.
6. A parent who is deaf attending any school event where their child is participating:
No, a DSPS license is required.
7. Students with disabilities participating in a variety of transition activities, which may include college preparation programs such as Upward Bound, work exploration, work experience, investigation of college and/or work opportunities and other appropriate community support services:
It depends on the specific facts of the situation.
- (a) **Yes**, if it is the activity takes place at the school, is part of the student's IEP, or if the school pays for the program, or gives credit for the program.
- (b) **No**, if the program doesn't take place at the school, the school does not pay for the program or give credit for the program, or if the program is not in the student's IEP. Then a DSPS license will be required.
8. A high school student who is deaf planning to attend a post-secondary program taking the ACT, SAT, or other college entrance exam:
Yes, if the event is part of the student's Transition plan on their IEP or is an event that is sponsored by the school.
9. After-school Boys and Girls Club or YMCA activities that are provided at the school and in cooperation with the school:
It depends on the specific facts of the situation.
- (a) **Yes**, if the after-school club is sponsored by the school.
- (b) **No**, if it is not sponsored by the school, but merely taking place at school under a lease type agreement. In that instance, a DSPS license may be required.

10. An adult staff member who is deaf:
No, a DSPS license is required.
11. A school board meeting:
No, a DSPS license is required.
12. A parent who is deaf comes to school to discuss his/her child with the staff; teacher, principal, counselor, etc.:
No, a DSPS license is required.
13. A professional who is deaf comes to the school to talk with a student who is deaf, and/ or the school staff:
No, a DSPS license is required.
14. The school brings in a deaf adult to present in an assembly (ex. magician):
No, a DSPS license is required.
15. The school has an event open to the community, (i.e. a celebration, school play, school carnival):
It depends on the specific facts of the situation.
- (a) **Yes**, if this is a school-sponsored event with only children present.
- (b) **No**, if this is merely permitting a community group to use the school facilities, then a DSPS license would probably be required.
16. Informational presentations for students *and adults* such as College fairs, etc:
No, a DSPS license is required when adults are present.
17. Truancy court:
No, truancy court is not a school sponsored event. For more information related to interpreting for a court proceeding, please see:
<http://www.wicourts.gov/services/interpreter/search.htm>.
18. Clinical audiology appointments for students outside of school:
No, this activity requires the DSPS license.